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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: ALL IS NOT QUIET ON THE NORTHERN FRONT

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER GLENN FEDZER FOR REASONS
1.4 (b) AND (d)

¶1. (C) A flurry of press releases and internet blogs indicating that the Tuareg militant group ADC (Alliance Democratique du Mai 23 pour le Changement), frustrated over the slow implementation of the Algiers Accords, has returned to the hills is likely limited to only to Ibrahim Bahanga and a few other Tuaregs, according to diplomatic sources in Bamako and embassy contacts in Kidal. Significantly, key ADC leader Iyad ag Aghaly has reportedly disavowed Bahanga's stance.

¶2. (C) Initial reports from European missions (including one ADC communique reportedly sent to the EU headquarters in Belgium) indicated that the ADC was dissatisfied with progress on the implementation of the accords. A local source indicated that one bone of contention was the location selected for the formation of Tuareg units as called for by the Accords. The location (the source could not specify where) was reportedly unacceptable to the Tuaregs as being too far from Kidal.

¶3. (S) Embassy sources indicated that Bahanga's anger was caused by the Malian Army, who followed him on trip to Tin-zawatene, a remote town on the Algerian border. Bahanga went to Tin-zawatene to coordinate his smuggling activities with Nigerien Tuaregs who had taken refuge in Mali following actions against the Niamey government. The arrival of a company-sized unit of the Malian 12th regiment in Tin-zawatene, along with Regimental Commander Lieutenant Colonel Keita, may have spooked the Nigeriens and angered Bahanga. The Army representatives and Bahanga argued, and an ADC representative was dispatched to bring Bahanga back to Kidal, although he reportedly remains in Tin-zawatene. A Malian Government source said that the ADC recently agreed to attach some ADC soldiers to the Malian military units being dispatched to the north to ease fears by some in the Tuareg population that the military could pose a threat to them (deployment of Malian troops to new locations in the North to be reported septel).

¶4. (S) Comment: Sources reported that Bahanga has departed Kidal with only 10-15 armed Tuaregs, and without the support of Iyad ag Aghaly, Bahanga does not represent a serious threat to stability. Bahanga, ironically the ADC's representative for conflicts and resolution, is among the most aggressive of the ADC leaders, and his stand likely represents an extreme position within the ADC. One Malian Government source indicated that it may even be due to a personal conflict between LTC Keita and Bahanga, as the former was in a unit years ago that fought directly against Bahanga. Most Tuareg leaders, with some including ag Aghaly holding recently acquired positions within the Malian Government, are likely to grant more time to have their concerns addressed.

